

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 7 August 2005

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League that provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

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IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY CENTRE OF ACTIVITY FREQUENCIES ECHOLINK & LAPTOP INFO FOR DATABASE THE LONDON BOMBING AFTERMATH GOVERNMENT GAZETTE HAMNET IMPLICATIONS YET ANOTHER COORDINATOR CERTIFICATE

HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070 and/or 3.650MHz. KZN also have a Wednesday evening call-up and meeting on their 2M repeater system with the introduction of an 80M relay on 3.650MHz.

The National Bulletin at 12H00 CAT on 7,070MHz in the 40M band with a relay on 14:225MHz in the 20M for the benefit of coastal regions. This time may change in due course but due to poor propagation conditions, we are currently trying this time until further notice.

The Gauteng North bulletin will probably also change due to the appointment of a new Provincial Director. We await further instructions.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province meets on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

Please note, this bulletin is available for download from the web site of the SARL under the heading "HAMNET". Please access this section of the website as it contains a host of relative information relating to HAMNET and is designed to assist members as far as possible with information.

CENTRE OF ACTIVITY FREQUENCIES DISCUSSION

After sending out the memo on the above for suggestions, I must admit that I should have mentioned that this does not affect our own homebrew and established emergency frequencies.

This was evident from some of the comments made that it would be a pity if we had to move away from our well established frequencies here in South Africa.

However, one comment about some old rigs being crystal controlled, raised, as far as I am concerned, a very minor problem. What happens if, through no choice of our own, we have to move! Do you have a host of other crystals available for the change of frequency?

For the foreseeable future, I see no reason whatsoever for us to change that at all. The only frequency of concern is 3.695MHz due to the wide spread of music being played in AM on 3.700MHz, and this happens every day of the week and spreads up to 15Kc either side. This is a major problem and I feel the time has come for us to look at changing this frequency to another slot in the 80M band. Please give this some thought!

However, looking at the suggested frequencies as indicated by Hans Zimmerman, we are looking at “global” strategy! We are looking at a situation like the recent tsunami in South East Asia where everybody was working everybody on various frequencies, which were all over the place, with no set plan of action!

The whole idea is quite simply; when we have an international problem, or a problem which requires international action ; we all know where to get together on a specific frequency, to establish an international network.

I think this will clear up any misunderstanding regarding this issue.

Having said that, many good ideas came forward like establishing set frequencies like 1.840; 3.640; 7.040; 14.140 etc. Then we have the problem of the 20M band where “ZR” operators are “provisionally” sidelined.

Those were the issues I was looking at and I had an excellent response from all those who took time-out to reply. And I thank you all very much.

Whatever I may suggest and our thoughts will be published for all to see, the final decision will still be made by the Region 1, 2 and 3 organisers and we will happily abide by them. The letter I sent to Hans Zimmerman is on view under the HAMNET segment of the SARL Web page for all to read. See Hamnet in Finland.

Again, looking at the South African scenario, the only frequency of real consequence for us here at the bottom end of Africa really is the 20 Metre band. At a guess less than 3% of operators in South Africa use 160M; the 80M band is not the best of emergency bands, unless you have an excellent antenna and running power; the 40M band could be useful again if one has an excellent antenna and running power; and above all, good propagation!

The 30M band is out for the “ZR” operators at this moment in time so it really does not matter which frequency is chosen. The 20M band, as mentioned earlier, is our best frequency for long distance emergency communication.

I have already mentioned to Hans that the suggested 14.180MHz will affect “a few” operators in South Africa and that I suggested a frequency above 14.225MHz.

However, I believe the real reason why many chose a frequency so low in the 20M band is because of heavy operations above the 14.200 MHz segment due to license restrictions/arrangements in some countries and that this portion of the band will be less cluttered with other operations during emergencies.

The other suggestion naturally for the “ZR” operators here in South Africa to obtain access to all the frequencies, is simply to graduate to “ZS” and then there will be no problem. With 5 alternative ways and means to obtain a ZS upgrade at their disposal, I cannot see why we should be overly concerned about the “ZR” prefixes. With all due respect, it is a minor issue!

ECHOLINK, APRS & LAPTOPS FOR DATABASE

The Terror Attack in London raised a couple of points on which we will have to expand our Database. Actually 2 issues came up for discussion!

How many of us are on ECHOLINK and how many of us have the facility of a laptop/notebook for slow scan operation. The latter may not be that important but it could be useful.

I do have ECHOLINK on my computer but rarely use it due to the cost of going into the Internet. But, in an emergency it will be good to know, from all the Hamnet members around the country, who have access to this means of communication when propagation leaves much to be desired.

Please let me know during the course of the next few weeks, preferably by e-mail, who of you has access to the above facilities so they can be brought into the Database for future reference.

I need to bring this into my Database as a matter of urgency as the “old” database is out of sync of what is required from it and I need to send out new discs to all Provincial Directors and other interested parties including South African Search & Rescue.

The refurbished Database will be available within the next week or two.

THE LONDON BOMBING AFTERMATH

Although communications was not too severely disrupted after the 4 bombs went off in London on 7 July, the cell phone networks, especially in the financial part of London, suffered severely.

In Britain they can invoke a system whereby cell phone communications is limited only to Police, Emergency services and Government Officials.

This was done in certain parts of London after the blasts with result that communication on cell phones was affected for a short while. Telephone lines, according to BT British Telecommunications, were not affected and were running normal.

RAYNET was on standby but were not called out for duty. Likewise, the Irish emergency group were also placed on high alert but not called out. I had no contact with any of my other counterparts, especially from Europe.

The only other point of interest was that world wide, all emergency services were placed on an alert footing due to this terrorist attack and there was fear that there could be more attacks or copy cat attacks. Fortunately this did not materialise.

Everything seems to be back to normal in London except for the clearing up operations underground which will still take a while as one of the explosions severely damaged one of the tunnels and there is the fear of the roof collapsing onto clearing up operators.

GOVERNMENT GAZETTE HAMNET IMPLICATIONS

The Government Gazette dated 24 June and numbered 27258 has some serious HAMNET implications when it comes to using our equipment for sporting and other events.

I may have mentioned this before in passing, but now ICASA insists that we inform the “National Body” i.e. the South African Radio League, at least 2 weeks prior to any event when we will provide communication. This notification, for which a special form is available under “Forms” on the Web site, will then be published for all to see.

This registration form will include all the names, call signs, and telephone numbers and if necessary, even a special call sign for the event should this be applicable.

Let s ensure that in future, we comply with the necessary requirements and not to jeopardise our privileges as Amateur Radio Operators.

YET ANOTHER COORDINATOR CERTIFICATE

Congratulations to Carel Oberholzer, ZR3OBE, soon to become ZS3OBE, who is another recipient of the RAC Emergency Coordinator certification examination.

This Canadian certificate seems to be a popular certificate to go for and my congratulations to those who take time out to study for this exam and pass it.

Well done Carel.

Final Comment: I have been informed that the Underberg Hamnet repeater is operational on 145:775 and will soon have packet and APRS facilities up and running. My thanks to Craig Dalglish, ZS5CID and the KZN Hamnet team for filling a gap in the Natal midlands area.

GAUTENG SOUTH MEETING A Provincial Hamnet meeting for Gauteng South and the Vaal triangle will be held on 27th Aug 2005, the venue will be at the house of Chris Willigenburg, 79 Coen Labuschagne str Rensburg Heidelberg. The time will be 14h00 for 14h30

All club chairman, club representatives, current and would be members are invited to attend. Although space is a bit limited I do believe that there should

be enough space for 20 to 30 people.

There are a number of burning issues to be discussed, so please diarize this date as important.

Please make a special effort to advise all your club members in your local bulletins.

Should you require a road map to get there, please contact Chris at zs6vb@kodaknigel.co.za or you can phone him on 011 309-9112.

A talk-in will be running on Saturday on 2 metres

That is all for today. Comments and suggestions to: zs6buu@uskonet.com Bulletin ends.